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MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



Tornado provides 'on the job training'

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

In one of life's ironies — or evidence of the hand of Providence — a tornado struck Magee and Simpson County a day before the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board held its annual Disaster Relief Task Force training on April 3-4 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko.

Several wry jokes were made about the potential for "on the job training," but Mississippi Baptists take pride in the fact that their volunteer's ministering in disasters are among the best-trained in Southern Baptist life.

Numbers show that 101 Task Force members participated in the training opportunities, which doesn't include those who were participating in relief efforts in Magee and who typically would have been at the training.

Task Force members could be considered the state's "strike team," according to Don Gann, consultant, Men's Ministry Department. "This group is our first responders and are multi-trained in several disciplines. These folks work with our feeding units, do chainsaw work, do mud-out and other recovery work, act as chaplains and child care workers, and so forth."

On the national level, the work of disaster relief ministry among Southern Baptists is staggering. According to Terry Henderson, disaster relief operations consultant at the North American Mission Board and a speaker at the Mississippi training, "Southern Baptists responded in 227 events. That represents 23,790 volunteers, 118,951 volunteer days, and 7,914,391 meals served in 2008. There were 11,776 children cared for, 247,113 gallons of water purified, 90,497 showers provided, 33,775 loads of laundry washed, and 34,187 ministry contacts made, with 448 professions of faith recorded."

During the afternoon and evening training sessions, Gann brought both veteran Task Force members and the "new recruits" up to speed on the previous year's activities.

"Hurricane Gustav was a real challenge for Mississippi and Louisiana," Gann said. "When we go into a situation, we try to identify several coastal churches as primary staging sites, with secondary sites further north."

For instance, during a hurricane, we designate First Church, Gulfport, as a primary site, with secondary sites in reserve. Nobody could tell when Gustav ended and Ike began, and that was a difficult situation. We didn't send any feeding units into Texas (after Ike), but we did provide chainsaw teams."



LEARNING THE ROPES — Volunteers at the Disaster Relief Training event at Central Hills Apr. 3-4 serve other volunteers from a feeding line set up at the camp. The new Task Force members learned how to prepare and serve food from the Convention's large feeding unit. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Currently, Southern Baptists and Mississippi Baptists are probably best known for providing meals, which are typically prepared at a host staging site and are delivered to people through the work of the American Red Cross on their emergency response vehicles and the Salvation Army's mobile canteens. Southern Baptists have a strong cooperative relationship with both entities.

New Task Force members were given the opportunity of preparing a meal for the rest of the participants at the training weekend to become familiar with such esoteric equipment as tilt skillets and convection ovens — just as they would in an actual disaster setting.

In addition to the customary training in food preparation, chainsaws, chaplaincy, and other disciplines offered to the Task Force members, training was provided for 141 volunteers from associations all over the state.

Associations and their participating churches attending training included Alcorn, Attala, Carroll-Montgomery, Chickasaw, Copiah, Golden Triangle, Humphreys, Jones, Kemper, Lawrence, Lee, Metro, Mid-Delta, Neshoba, North Central, North Delta, Panola, Pontotoc, Sharkey-Issaquena, Washington, Wayne, X-Tended Missions, and Yazoo.

"The work of the associations and churches is part of our expansion of disaster relief ministry," said Gann. "It gives our strike team a bit of a break. If there is a large or long-term disaster, these specialized teams can do a lot of work."

Training provided for the association and church teams included chaplaincy, chainsaw, feeding, mud-out, and blue tarp (temporary roof repairs). "There is a real hunger out there among the churches and associations to do this kind of ministry," Gann said.

When asked how churches and associations could get involved, Gann said, "Sometimes churches and associations approach us, sometimes we approach them. In 2010, we want to provide training in every area of the state."

"For instance, a church may call and say, 'We've got a dozen men who want to be trained in chainsaw. Can you train us?' So we'll either do training for that particular church, or, ideally, we'll come into an association and train a larger group of people."

As an example, Gulf Coast Association has 150 people trained, and Temple Church in Hattiesburg was able to send a team to Kentucky after the ice storms from their church alone. A group from Morrison Heights in Clinton was able to get blue tarps on the home of Ken Westbrook (pastor of Corinth Church, Magee) after the tornado. Churches or associations can call us, and we'll just take it from there."

For more information on the disaster relief ministry of Mississippi Baptists, and to discuss training opportunities for churches or associations, contact Gann at (601) 292-3339, or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 339. E-mail: dgann@mbcb.org.



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What it took to get us here

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. — Isaiah 53:2-9 (NIV)

As we rightly prepare to observe Easter 2009 with the joy and appreciation of the saved, we know that our Savior lives and is one day coming for us, His beloved. There's no doubt about that.

Christians celebrate our risen Savior with images of the empty tomb with death clothes neatly folded on the slab of rock where Jesus was laid. Our crosses

memorialize the sacrifice He made for us, and emphasize the significance of His resurrection. To those religious symbols we have added eggs, bunny rabbits, and baskets of colorful candy.

Sometimes it seems too neat and clean — almost sterile. It's an easy thing to read a few chapters of the Bible once a year or so about the mistreatment of Jesus and then go about our daily business. Perhaps we should pause during this season of victory, and contemplate exactly what it was Jesus went through to save us. It wasn't nearly as pretty as our modern images depict.

The beating that Jesus endured can hardly be imagined today, in our gentle society. All the flesh was literally torn from his back, exposing raw nerve endings and ragged muscle. On that mangled and bleeding back was placed a wooden cross, large and heavy and rough so that the pain in His still-fresh wounds would be maximized. He was beaten again as he carried his own instrument of death to the place of the skull.

There, he was stripped naked and fastened to the cross he had carried with the large-diameter, blunt-end nails of the day that severed nerves and blood vessels with great agony. His feet were affixed in a similar manner, configured so as to make it impossible to breathe once the cross was upright.

His cross dropped with a thud into the hole where it would stand, no doubt tearing the flesh around the nails and further opening the wounds. After a short while, insects attracted from great distances by the scent of His blood settled into the open wounds.

He hung there, gasping for breath and pleading for water as those around the cross ridiculed him. The pain rose, the insects increased, the mockery rang in his ears, and yet His only plea was for His Father to forgive us.

After a prolonged period of agony, it was finished and the happy part began. The tomb was soon empty, our Savior had risen, and the world would never be the same.

We Christians have every right to celebrate the greatest event in history, the completed plan of eternal salvation for all mankind. However, let us never overlook what it took to get us to that point. It wasn't pretty, and it didn't come without unimaginable suffering, but it had to be done. The prophet Isaiah understood those facts 700 years before Christ was born. On this and every joyous Easter, we should too.

Happy Easter
April 12, 2009

Saddleback baptizes 800 in three-and-a-half hour service

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (BP) — Saddleback Church baptized 800 people in a marathon three and a half hour ceremony March 28, after nearly 2,400 people attended a four-hour class for people interested in becoming members of the church.

Several hundred people made first-time professions of faith during the C.L.A.S.S. 101 session, according to a statement released by the Lake Forest, Calif., church's public relations firm.

Senior pastor Rick Warren said the new members' class — the largest in the congregation's 30-year history — could be related to the economic and social turmoil people are experiencing these days.

"God never meant for you to go through life alone; you need relationship, you need a spiritual family," Warren said in the statement. "The Bible says the church is the support and foundation of the truth."

The new members' class, which Warren taught himself for the first time in 10 years, introduces the fundamentals of Christian faith and Saddleback's history. It explains that church membership requires commitment and accountability, including an expectation that members serve in ministry.

Saddleback encourages people who have completed C.L.A.S.S. 101 also to take three additional courses that help new believers grow in Christ and discover God's purpose

and mission for their lives. More than 35,000 people have completed C.L.A.S.S. 101.

Taking the classes can be an eye-opening experience, said Jim Walls, the volunteer coordinator for the new members' course.

"My life changed when I took Class 101," Walls told the Orange County Register. "God used it to help me understand more of what He intended in a relationship. I learned the difference between ritual and a relationship with God."

Walls also said he thought the stress people are feeling today may be one reason so many are looking to Christ for answers.

"Stress serves the purpose of softening hearts and humbling us," Walls told the Register. "The greatest victory is when stress opens doors to people's hearts to something better — that being a relationship with God through Christ. God can work a victory out of a financial crisis just as he does out of any crisis."



LONG LINE — Nearly 800 people were baptized March 28 at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., by Rick Warren and other pastors of the congregation. (BP photo)

Six members of one Saddleback small group in Anaheim were baptized together in the ceremony.

"It's good to see God at work in so many people's lives," said Steven Tang, the small group leader.

"This is what the small group community is about and what Pastor Rick is always talking about. It's amazing to be able to live and participate in the reality of it."

Authorities step up persecutions in Iran

WASHINGTON (BP) — Reports are emerging from Iran of heightened persecution of Christians.

Two Christian women are being detained by Iranian security forces as "anti-government activists," according to International Christian Concern, a human rights organization based in Washington. The imprisoned women reportedly are in ill health.

A Pentecostal church in Tehran has been ordered closed and three Iranian Christian men have been declared guilty of cooperating with "anti-government movements," according to Compass Direct News of Santa Ana, Ca., which provides reports on Christians worldwide who are persecuted for their faith.

In an overview of persecution in Iran, International Christian Concern stated: "Iranian officials have dramatically increased their persecution of Christians following the conversion of a large number of Muslims to Christianity. Last year alone, 50 Christians were arrested for practicing their faith, some of whom were tortured. There have also been reports that Christians died due to the torture they were forced to endure."

As phrased by Compass Direct News, there were "more than 50 documented arrests of Christians in 2008

alone." Compass added that "the recent government crackdown includes Christian institutions that minister beyond Iran's tiny indigenous Christian community."

Compass also noted: "A new penal code under consideration by the Iranian Parliament includes a bill that would require the death penalty for apostasy."

International Christian Concern, in its April 2 report on the two detained women, recounted: "... [O]n March 5, 2009, Iranian security forces detained two Christian women for practicing Christianity. Iranian officials allege that Marzieh Amairizadeh Esmaeilabad and Maryam Rustampoor are 'anti-government activists.'"

"According to the Farsi Christian News Network (FCNN), Iranian security officials searched the apartment shared by the two women and confiscated their personal belongings before they handcuffed and took the Christians to Police and Security Station 137 in Gaysha, west of Tehran. After appearing before the Revolutionary Court on March 18, the women were sent to the notorious Evin prison. Iranian officials told the Christian women to post bail at a staggering amount of \$400,000 in order to be released from the prison."

"Both women are allowed just a one minute telephone

call every day to their immediate families. Both are unwell and in need of urgent medical attention. During their last call on March 28, Marzieh said that she was suffering from an infection and high fever. She said, 'I am dying,' reported FCNN."

The Pentecostal church in Tehran was ordered closed because "it offered a Farsi-language service attended by converts from Islam," Compass reported March 31, attributing the information to the Farsi Christian News Network.

The church, which consists of Assyrian believers, was ordered closed by the Islamic Revolutionary Court, which, as Compass described it, was established as part of the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic revolution.

An Assyrian member of Parliament, Yonathan Betkolia, announced the order on March 19.

Compass recounted that Betkolia last October had lauded freedoms extended to Iranian minority groups, but "he has publicly protested" the church allowing Farsi-language services for "non-Assyrians" (namely Muslims). An unnamed regional analyst said Betkolia waged the protest, as Compass put it, because "the increase in government pressure on the Christian community has put him in a difficult position."

Compass quoted the analyst as saying, "As a representative of the Assyrian community, a priority for Betkolia is to ensure the preservation of the limited freedoms and relative peace his traditional Christian community enjoys. Disassociation from a church which has welcomed believers from a Muslim background should therefore be seen as a form of self-defense."

Compass reported that the pastor of the church "has indicated that cancelling Farsi-language services may allow it to continue, though it was unclear at press time whether the congregation's leadership was willing to make that compromise."

Meanwhile, the three Iranian Christians declared guilty March 10 of cooperating with "anti-Christian movements" have received eight-month suspended prison sentences with a five-year probation but, Compass reported, the Islamic Revolutionary Court judge said he would enforce the sentences of Seyed Allaedin Hussein, Homayoon Shokouhi, and Seyed Amir Hussein Bob-Annari and try them as "apostates," or those who abandon Islam, if they violate their probation "including a ban on contacting one another," Compass noted.

Compass reported: "The 'anti-government movements' referred to by the judge are satellite television stations Love Television and Salvation TV. Unlike the Internet, which is heavily censored in Iran, the two 24-hour satellite TV stations can bypass government information barriers."

"Sources said links between the accused and these organizations, however, remain tenuous," Compass continued, quoting an unnamed source as saying, "The TV link came up almost six months after [the original arrests], so it is very new. We believe they just made it up, or it is something they want to make appear more important than is the reality."

Compass further reported: "The three men were arrested by security forces on May 11, 2008, at the Shiraz airport while en route to a Christian marriage seminar in Dubai. According to a report by Farsi Christian News Network (FCNN), at that time the families of the three men avoided formal charges by agreeing to terms of release, including payment of a bond amount. Details of the terms were undisclosed."

According to Compass, "The number of Assyrian Christians in the country is estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000, with estimates of Armenian Christians in Iran ranging from 110,000 to 300,000."



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Homosexual site opens

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Harmony, the company that built much of its early success by advertising in Christian media, has launched a parallel matchmaking website for homosexuals, billing it as service that helps foster "serious relationships for the gay and lesbian community." The CompatiblePartners.net website went live in recent days, several months after eHarmony and the New Jersey attorney general's office announced a settlement to an investigation that began nearly four years earlier when a homosexual man filed a complaint alleging that eHarmony, which at the time didn't match same-sex couples, was in violation of state law. New Jersey has an anti-discrimination law covering "sexual orientation." As part of the November settlement, eHarmony agreed to launch the website, advertise it in homosexual media, and allow the first 10,000 users to register for free. The new website features pictures of men holding hands and women hugging and claims to be a "site for singles seeking a long-term, same-sex relationship." The settlement came as a shock to quite a few pro-family leaders who felt that while the investigation was another example of religious freedom under fire, eHarmony nevertheless should have put up a legal fight. The Boy Scouts famously won a lawsuit in New Jersey on a related matter that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. That suit, decided in 2000, also pertained to New Jersey's anti-discrimination law and alleged that under the law the Boy Scouts couldn't prohibit homosexuals from serving as troop leaders. eHarmony's founder, psychologist Neil Clark Warren, has been the public face for the company in numerous TV commercials and was featured on Focus on the Family's radio programs during eHarmony's first few years. "Sadly, by failing to aggressively defend their own Biblical beliefs and American freedoms," Americans for Truth President Peter LaBarbera wrote, "Mr. Warren and his eHarmony executives (and lawyers) made it that much easier [for homosexual leaders] to go after ours."

Looking back

10 years ago

An arsonist sets a total of 15 fires throughout Crossgates Church, Brandon, early morning, April 6, but all the fires apparently extinguished themselves before the Brandon fire department arrived.

20 years ago

William Carey College (now University) president Ralph Noonkester says that despite rumors, WCC has no intention of closing its Gulf Coast campus. WCC is in the midst of two inquiries, one by the Association of Colleges and Schools, and the second by the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission.

50 years ago

Broadmoor Church, Jackson, voted Apr. 5 to adopt a set of recommendations that would mean the building of a new church building. The church voted to accept a base bid of \$476,818.74 for a completely finished new auditorium.

BIBLIOPHET

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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KF NK XK LGRB? NK

AQGL BRSL, KF NK

XLANFKI RN?

BTWL ARH: DRDL

Clue: :Y = H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Five: Thirty-six

EASTER INSIDE OUT

This coming Lord's Day will be a great day all across our state, nation, and around the world as Christians gather together to celebrate our living Lord. It is a fact that He lives. It is not fiction, fairytale, or fable, but it is an indisputable fact that Jesus died, arose again, and reigns on high. I trust that you will be a part of a singing, celebrating, and sharing church that will meet to praise Him, pray to Him, and provide wonderful opportunities for others to come to Him.

It seems to me that one of the things that must change about Easter is that we need to have Easter inside out. Let me explain what I am talking about by looking at John's Gospel. The Scripture says that, "The disciples were gathered together behind closed doors for fear of the Jews" (John 20:19). They knew that Jesus was alive, but they were afraid of the pressure and even the consequences that might come from the culture in which they lived, and so they just gathered in an enclave of loyal believers and kept the doors locked. We cannot and must not do that.

While it is a joy to gather with believers in a warm fellowship, to be encouraged by the songs and sermon, and to be lifted by the strength of other believers, we cannot sit inside our little rooms of worship and still make an impact on the world. The Good News that Jesus changes lives, transforms homes, and rescues people caught in the nasty web of sin, must reach beyond the doors of the church. The disciples inside that room behind those doors experienced

the invasion of Jesus who just seemed to walk through the bolted doors. Jesus brought them courage, vision, creativity, and boldness that would take them out of that room and put them in the marketplace of their world to announce that He was alive. The result was the fiery disciples of Pentecost.

Easter Week at the Baptist Building has been different this year. For 10 years, I have been bringing the Baptist Building employees and any of their family, friends, or guests to be a part of special Easter Week services. We have had some great times together and the Lord has come and met with us.

We have been revived, challenged, and blessed as the Lord showed up to meet with us but for several years, I have wanted to figure out how we could go to everyone and invite the city or anyone who would love to participate to come and be with us. In searching for a way and asking the Lord in prayer to give me some direction, this year I felt led to make a request of the New Capitol building authorities to allow us to hold noon services on the steps of the Mississippi State Capitol. They granted us permission and we prepared for those services and invited any and everyone to Easter at the Capitol.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

We had music and a message, the gathering of Baptist Building employees, and any and every person who wanted to come and join with us outside, standing up, and participating in Easter at the Capitol. For the first time for us, it was Easter inside out. It was Easter that we used to have inside in our chapel area carried outside into the very center of the state's life. Of course, the reality is that Jesus made His triumphal entry into the capitol. As He entered the streets of

that capitol so many years ago, Jerusalem was the capitol not only of the country politically and governmentally, but also economically and spiritually, intellectually and morally.

It was our prayer that Jesus would come to our capitol in our state this week. A friend of mine with a chuckle jokingly said, "Well that is a rather novel idea, carrying Jesus to where the people are!" The sad thing is that so many of us who know Him and will meet to sing praises to His name and hear again of His power to live and forgive, will keep that Good News behind locked doors. May this Easter for you, your church, and for every one of us be an Easter that has an inside out dimension.

Let us let everyone know that JESUS is alive and He is changing lives.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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FBC LAUDERDALE, LAUDERDALE, Miss., is seeking a part-time minister of music. Please send resume to FBC of Lauderdale, 3659 Lauderdale Road, Lauderdale, MS 39335, attn: music minister search committee or you can email your resume to rgarrett634@comcast.net.

MEADOWVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, Starkville, MS, is seeking pianist. Please send resumes to 300 Linden Circle, Starkville, MS 39759, attn: personnel committee.

NORTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH, Vicksburg, MS, is seeking full-time Pastor. Send resumes to pastor search committee, 28 Mingos Road, Vicksburg, MS 39183.

SEEKING PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: Gillsburg Baptist Church, Gillsburg, Miss., is searching for a Minister of Youth. Traveling expenses provided. Mail resumes to Chris Teasley at 6126 MS Hwy 568, Osyka, MS, 39657 or call 601 542-1230.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

April 9, 2009

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

PREACHING

Featured Presenters:

Daniel Caldwell
Ronald Meeks
Wayne VanHorn
C. Alan Woodward

Blue Mountain College
Monday, April 20

Mississippi College
Tuesday, April 21

William Carey University
Wednesday, April 22

For more info: Pastor/Leadership Department
601-292-3305, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 305
kmcconnell@mbcb.org

2009 SENIOR ADULT RETREATS

Cost \$5 per day or
preregister for both days

Retreat I

May 18-19

FBC, Holly Springs

**Preacher: Clarence Cooper
Brandon**

Justified Jug Band, Olive Branch;
Bill King; Conrad Howell;
Forrest Smith;
P.J. Scott; Daniel Hall;
Dulcimers Band, Northeast;
FBC Choir, New Albany;

For more information on these events,
call Glenn Shows at
601-292-3373 or 800-748-1651, ext. 373

BSU Campus Highlights

Wayne Vandiver



NORTHEAST MS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Booneville

During February, we took 31 students on our annual New Orleans mission trip to share Christ with people in the city. This event usually involves students from several campuses. This year, our group included students from MSU BSU and Northeast BSU, with 31 participating. We spent three nights in the French Quarter, handing out tracts and sharing Christ with people on Bourbon St. On Saturday night, we turned Vieux Carre Baptist Church (one block off Bourbon St.) into a coffeehouse. We divided our group into three teams and rotated on the hour between three activities: street ministry, coffeehouse hosting, and prayer ministry. Two people prayed to receive Christ as a result of this mission trip! All the students that participated talked about how the trip helped them to get over their fear of witnessing.

Gary Dawson



HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Raymond

Each Thursday a group of students from Hinds BSU minister to elementary age children at Crestwood Baptist Church on Bailey Avenue in Jackson. The church has an after school ministry to help kids with their homework and to provide a safe environment for them during the afternoon hours. A freshman from our group who is involved with the college ministry at Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton has been leading the charge encouraging his peers to come, spend time, and love on the kids. Students from Morrison Heights, Mississippi College BSU and Hinds BSU are a part of this ongoing effort. Our students have really enjoyed spending time with the kids and being involved in community ministry right here in Jackson. Plus it is a good way for us to partner with churches to help meet needs.

Scott Vaughn



EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Decatur

Our student ministry team, "The Way," was recently invited to come lead worship at First Baptist Church, Morton. Our team led in praise music, interpretive movement, and drama. A dramatic monologue was given by one of our freshmen, Elise Gibbs, about the importance of abstinence before marriage. The team concluded with freshman, Jared Mullins, preaching a short message on abstinence.

After his message, the pastor, Earl Clark, stood and led the congregation in an invitation. Brother Clark later said, "I felt that we needed to be more proactive in praying for our young people to be pure before marriage. So I invited parents and grandparents to come forward and pray for their teenagers and children." In response 10-12 adults came forward to kneel and pray for their children. He also invited any youth to come forward to pray, and five-six youth responded. Jason Westmoreland, the youth minister, shared that he was very impressed with how concise and clear our group made their message.

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Reservations
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8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
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2009 PRESCHOOL/ CHILDREN'S MINISTER RETREAT FOLLOW THE LEADER

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center
Monday, April 27 and Tuesday, April 28

Cost \$45. Registration begins at 1 p.m. at Patterson Place

Charity Gwaltney - FBC, Starkville

Ronnie Falvey - FBC, Madison

Chuck Myers - Worship - Raymond Road BC

Questions? Contact Don Gann or Deanna Vail at 601-292-3335
or 1-800-748-1651 or dgann@mbcb.org or dvail@mbcb.org

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You may also check our Web site at
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ANNUAL MISSIONS CELEBRATION WITH ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, May 2,
10:30 a.m. - noon

CELEBRATION
FEATURING ...

Worship Leader
Chuck Myers

with special guest,

April Westbrook

Donna Swarts,
President
Mississippi WMU

Kay Cassibry,
Executive Director
Mississippi WMU

Matt & Shea,
IMB Representatives
Jerry Mowdy,
MSC Representative

2009 STATE SENIOR ADULT RALLY

FEATURING:

Thursday, August 27

Morrison Heights BC, Clinton

Al Staggs

Daniel Hall

Ivan Park

Joe Sherrer

To register call 1-800-748-1651 ext. 216. Or mail fee to MBCB Conference
Ministry Office, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

MAY 1-2

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Reservation Deadline is April 17, 2009 • Full refunds prior to April 17.
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Mail to: Ian Richardson, WTM, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530
FOR MORE INFO: 601-292-3378 OR 1-800-748-1651, ext. 378

2009 STATE SINGLE'S RETREAT 30th Anniversary

May 16 & 17

Central Hills, Koscuisko Theme: "Single Life with a Plus"

To register call 1-800-748-1651 ext. 216.
Or mail fee to MBCB Conference Ministry
Office, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.
Deadline to register is May 8th.

2009 Family Celebrations

Saturday, May 9, Hattiesburg Baptist Association Family Life Center

For contact information:

mbcb.org or call 662-289-4294

Saturday, May 16, Williamsville Baptist Church, Kosciusko
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

For contact information:

662-289-4294 or E-mail Attala Baptist Association at
ahambw@bellsouth.net

Special Guests

Ventriloquist: Judy Marby, Destin, Fla.; Juggling, fire blowing, magic and more with Robert Day, Byram

State Literacy Missions Conference

Crossgates BC
Brandon
July 16-18

For more information,
contact
Paula Smith
(601-292-3336
or psmith@mbcb.org)
or Karen Redditt
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Family Ministry
Department
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dchick@mbcb.org



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Tony Merida
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Saturday, May 30, 2009 • 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

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For More Information

Check out the website at www.mbcb.org by
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Contact your local Associational Missions Director.
Call Laura Marler in Mission Strategy at the
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.
(800) 748-1651 ext 231 or (601) 292-3231
Email: lmarter@mbcb.org

Directions to TEMPLE Baptist Church, Hattiesburg WEST CAMPUS

Temple is located just west of I-59.
Take I-59 to Exit 65, US-98/Hardy Street toward Columbia (heading west).
Travel approximately 3.5 miles. Turn left on Old Highway 11/Norton Road.
Temple Baptist Church will be approximately one mile on the left.

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if registered May 2 - June 3, NO REGISTRATIONS OR REFUNDS ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 3.
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1-800-748-1651, ext. 284, or E-mail redwards@mbcb.org. You can also download forms
from our Web site: mbcb.org or mssupersummer.com

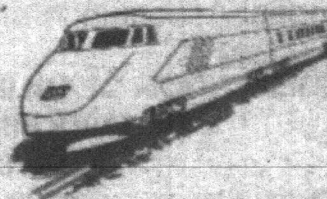
The Orient Express

CHILDREN'S MISSIONS EXTRAVAGANZA

All 1st-6th grade children who are coming with their parents to the
Refresh Conference at Temple Baptist Church on Saturday, May 30, are
invited to participate in a Missions Extravaganza. We are going on an
imaginary journey to several countries in the Pacific Rim. In each
country, we will hear a missionary story and make a craft.

Come join us on this incredible adventure on the Orient Express!

Childcare will be available at no cost for all preschoolers who are
coming with their parents by the Preschool Ministry Department at
Temple Baptist Church. There is no cost for the child care or the Missions
Extravaganza, however preregistration is required. The deadline to
register is Friday, May 15, 2009. To register for the Missions
Extravaganza or child care, please call Diane Howell in the Preschool
Ministry Department at Temple Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, at 601-450-
3069.



HOTEL INFORMATION

Microtel Inn • (601) 450-1592
105 Westover Drive
Hattiesburg, MS • 39402

Ask for Group Code Title: REFRESH Conference

(Hotel is located just west of I-59 or Exit 65
on the north side of Highway 98)



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Jim Fulmer, Executive Director-Treasurer

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"Come now, let us reason together" says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

Pray for a worker in the country of Georgia as he prepares for a busy summer of children's and youth camps. Pray for wisdom and direction as he continues to work out a strategy for reaching the people of Georgia.

(1) Life Commitment Sunday (P/LD) Emphasis; (2) Pray for two men from Lauderdale Association, April 20-24, as they travel to Dominican Republic to take part in evangelism and discipleship opportunities.

Pray for a team led by **North Oxford Baptist Church** in Oxford, April 13-24, as they travel to a country in Southeast Asia to be a part of music and medical mission opportunities.

(1) Pray for five members of **Clary Baptist Church** in Florence as they travel to southern India, April 20-30, to explore opportunities with unreached people groups. Pray for God's protection and direction as they interact with these people; (2) Preaching Conference, Blue Mountain; (3) State Bible Drills, Tupelo.

(1) State Bible Drill, FBC, Long Beach; Longview Heights BC, Olive Branch, 2-5 p.m. (D&FM); (2) VBS Church Leadership Training, Clarksdale BC, Clarksdale; Calvary BC, Macon; Siloam BC, Meadville, 6:30-9 p.m. (SS).

(1) Preaching Conference, Mississippi College, Clinton, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (P/LD); (2) State Bible Drill, FBC Starkville, 2-5 p.m. (D&FM); (3) VBS Church Leadership Training, FBC, Belzoni; FBC, Oxford 6:30-9 p.m. (SS).

Pray for the East Asia Summit being held in Collierville, Tenn., April 15-17. Many workers from that region will be here to share about what God is doing in East Asia and inviting more churches to become involved in the work.

(1) Kids Ministry in Motion, Garaywa Camp & Conference Center, Clinton, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (Preschool/Children's Team); (2) Preaching Conference, William Carey University, Hattiesburg, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (P/LD).

(1) State Bible Drill, FBC, Brookhaven; Emmanuel BC, Grenada, 2-5 p.m. (D&FM); (2) VBS Church Leadership Training, Gaston BC, Booneville; Parkway BC, Kosciusko; Temple BC (West Campus), Hattiesburg (SS).

(1) State Bible Drill, FBC, Laurel, 2-5 p.m. (D&FM); (2) Pray for a team from **Morrison Heights Baptist Church** in Clinton as they travel to a country in North Africa to do medical mission work, April 24-May 2.

Pray for workers in Northern Thailand as they work and minister among the Northern Thai people. Pray that hearts will continue to be opened and that many more will come to know Christ through the efforts there.

Pray for a mission team from **Woodlawn Baptist Church** in Vicksburg, April 11-17, as they travel to Honduras to work with children and youth. Pray that God will give opportunity to share Christ and his love with these young people.

(1) State Bible Drill, Temple BC, Hattiesburg; Poplar Springs Drive BC, Meridian, 2-5 p.m. (D&FM); (2) State Handbell Festival, FBC, McComb, 6 p.m., 17th-1:30 p.m., 18th (CM); (2) State Bible Drill, FBC, Clinton; Crossgates BC, Brandon, 9 a.m.-noon, 18th (D&FM).

(1) A team from **Highland Baptist Church** in Vicksburg is traveling to Mexico, April 18-25, to participate in an Operation Go mission project. Pray that this gospel distribution project will be fruitful, and that this team will have opportunities to speak often about Christ.



FamilyFESTSM Natchez, Mississippi July 18-23, 2009

FamilyFESTSM is a pre-packaged missions trip for families, adult teams and student teams. It is ministry driven. This FamilyFEST is a partnership between national WMU[®] Mississippi Baptist Convention departments (MS WMU, the Men's Ministry, and Adams Baptist Association and local participating churches).

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

	EARLY BIRD April 18	REGULAR May 18
Individual	\$125	\$140
Family of 2	\$225	\$255
Family of 3	\$325	\$370
Family of 4	\$400	\$460
Family of 5 or more	\$500	\$575

TO REGISTER:

CALL
(205) 991-8100
OR VISIT
www.wmu.com/volunteerconnection

State contacts: Tammy Anderson (MS WMU)
or Don Gann (Men's Ministry) 1-800-748-1651

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6-2-89

MISS REBEKAH CLARK
Parents: Richard & Wanda
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6-3-04

MISS MAGGIE WINGO
Parents: Floyd & Sylvia
South America

6-12-96

MISS AUDREY L. YOUNG
Parents: Steven & Laura
Middle America & the Caribbean

6-15-05

MR. ETHAN EPPS
Parents: Aaron & Tiffany
South America

6-17-95

MR. SETH D.
Parents: P & D
CEE

6-22-94

MISS MARY KATHRYN YOUNG
Parents: Steven & Laura
Middle America & the Caribbean

6-21-51

MISS MELODY W.
Parents: Matt & Shea W.
Last Frontier

6-29-95

MR. LEE TAYLOR ROBERTS
Parents: Marty & Suzanne
Central & Eastern Europe

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to:
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PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU.

HOUSE TOPS

Heisman winner sets heart for inner city ministry

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Though he won the Heisman Trophy in 1996 as a quarterback for the University of Florida, Danny Wuerffel was blindsided many times by blitzing defensive ends and linebackers. Nothing in football prepared him for the blow his heart received as he drove past a squalid and decaying housing project one afternoon on his way to football practice as a member of the New Orleans Saints.

Wuerffel assumed that the dilapidated building was fit only for destruction, but as he looked, a small girl carrying a baby doll emerged from a front door. That house of horrors was her home. Never had a 300-pound defensive end hit Wuerffel with such visceral force.

"This building should have been torn down decades earlier," Wuerffel said, "but this little girl was living there. It broke my heart because I knew this just wasn't right. The Lord opened my eyes that day to see something that was going on in my own backyard, something I had seen a hundred times, but hadn't really ever seen. That's where it began."

The seed of desire for inner-city ministry was sown in Wuerffel that afternoon. He recounted his testimony and his ongoing work with Desire Street Ministries at Southern Seminary in a March 24 presentation sponsored by the Dehoney Center for Urban Ministry.

Soon after seeing the young girl in the slum, Wuerffel sought out Desire Street Ministries, located in New Orleans' Ninth Ward, one of the country's most dangerous and down-and-out neighborhoods. Desire Street Ministries proclaims the Gospel among the inner-city poor and works for their economic and educational renewal.

"I remember the first time I went down to this neighborhood I was blown away by the dire poverty, the injustice, the violence, the lack of education

— everything about this neighborhood broke my heart," Wuerffel said.

"I had heard of and seen places like this from a long way off in Third World countries, but what hit me was this was right down the road from the Superdome where the Florida Gators won the national championship, where I was playing professional football. In a sense, this was in my own backyard and I wasn't even aware of it."

From 1993-96, Wuerffel was the University of Florida's starting quarterback, leading the Gators to a national title during 1996, his Heisman season. He was drafted by the New Orleans Saints and played seven years in the NFL before retiring after the 2002 season to work full-time with Desire Street Ministries in New Orleans.

Wuerffel began volunteering with Desire Street Ministries while playing for the Saints, and he continued to live in New Orleans while playing for Green Bay and Washington later in his career. When he returned to work full-time at Desire Street Ministries, Wuerffel and his wife moved into the Ninth Ward, choosing to live among the people they sought to serve in spite of the obvious dangers that haunted the neighborhood.

"The thing I really began to see [is] God's heart for such a place as the Ninth Ward of New Orleans," Wuerffel said. "As we begin to open the Scriptures, there are a number of themes that we miss until our attention is called to it, and I am convinced with all my heart that God has a special place in his heart for the poor, for those without a voice, for the orphans, for the widows, for the disenfranchised."

"It is in every book of Scripture, every genre, beginning to end. It is very important to God and it is very important to Him that His people care about it as well. While there were lots of things I could do with my life as I began to retire,

as I began to see my life and how it intersected with Desire Street, I knew that God had a heart for the poor and He wanted me to as well."

Desire Street Ministries planted a church in New Orleans and in 2002 began Desire Street Academy, but the ministry fell into serious jeopardy when Hurricane Katrina stormed ashore in August 2005, putting much of New Orleans under water.

The storm surge destroyed the Wuerffels' home, immersing it in water up to the roof. It also claimed Desire Street's headquarters, the academy and the new church.

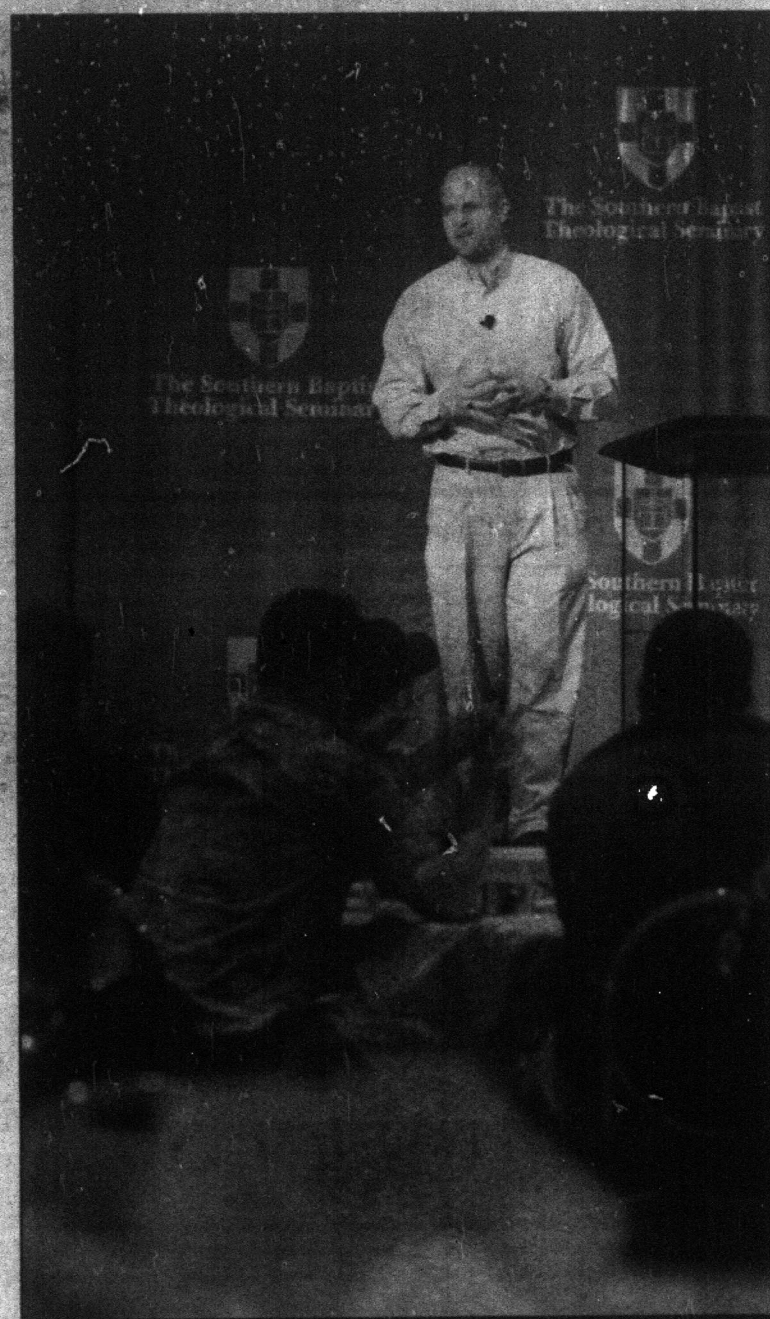
In the days following the historic storm, Wuerffel and the Desire Street staff labored to find a new headquarters for the ministry and its academy. The church, however, joined the ranks of Katrina's victims.

The academy reopened for the 2005-06 school year as a boarding school in Niceville, Fla. The next year the school moved to its current home in Baton Rouge, where it has become the foundation of an outreach to the inner city of Louisiana's capital city.

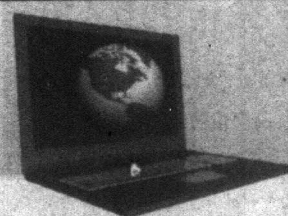
The ministry, meanwhile, relocated its headquarters to metro Atlanta, where Wuerffel, his wife, and three children live today. In 2006, Wuerffel was appointed executive director of the ministry when founder Mo Leverett resigned. Desire Street today has partner ministries in four cities in the Southeast.

Wuerffel, who is the son of a minister, said he would not trade his work at Desire Street Ministries for a place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

"I look at all that a great quarterback like Peyton Manning has accomplished and I think it's great," Wuerffel said, "and I'm happy for Peyton, but I wouldn't trade places with him. It has been a tremendous blessing to watch God transform so many people in these difficult places by His grace."



EYES WIDE OPEN — Former Heisman Trophy winner Danny Wuerffel spoke at Southern Seminary March 24, telling an audience how God opened his eyes to the needs of inner-city ministry. (BP photo courtesy of John Gill/SBTS)



Visit us online at
www.mbc.org
to learn more about
Mississippi Baptist opportunities.

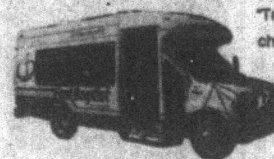
REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- Hermanville Church, Union Association:** 125th anniversary, Apr. 19; services, 10 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and special music, time capsule, etc. Wayne Coleman and Scott Thomas, speakers.
- Beacon Street Church, Philadelphia:** Revival, Apr. 19 - 22; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.
- Utica Church, Utica:** 180th anniversary, Apr. 26; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck dinner; Danny Rutland, speaker.
- Ramah Church, McCall Creek:** Homecoming, Apr. 19; services, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; David McGuffee, speaker.
- Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Apr. 26; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; singing, 10:15 a.m.; special presentation and services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and fellowship; Randy Lewman, speaker; Smith Family, music; James Sanders, pastor.
- Calvary Church, Columbia:** 60th anniversary, Apr. 26; services, 10 a.m.; Crawford Williams, Robert Toney, and Trent Bilbo, speakers; Brad Day, music.
- Thrasher Church, Booneville:** Revival, Apr. 19 - 23; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Thurs., 7 p.m.; Ray Hall, speaker; Mike Hughes, music; Dewitt Bain, pastor.
- Weir Church, Weir:** 100th anniversary, Apr. 25 - 26; Sat., 3 p.m., reception, building tours, historical displays, outside games and activities, and One Way quartet in concert; Sun., services, 10:30 a.m., followed by meal; Leon Ballard, speaker.

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Greg Stephenson
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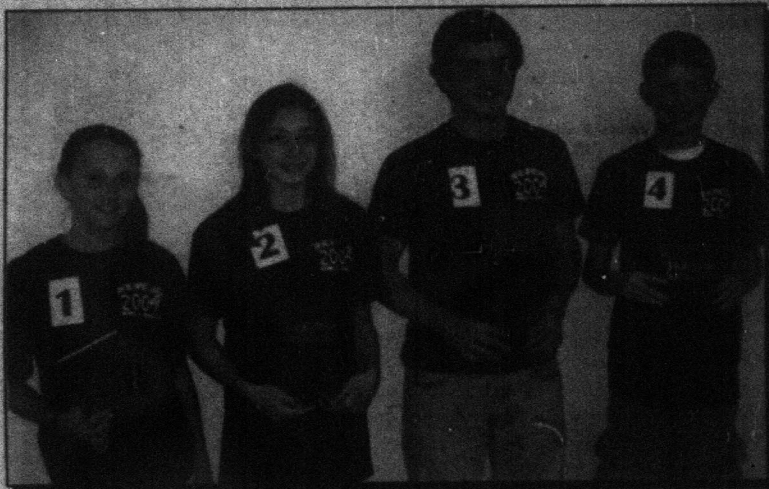
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1a. Oak Hill Church children's drillers



1b. Oak Hill Church youth drillers



2. Core ordination



3. Worsham and Springer



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. **Oak Hill Church, Meridian**, recognizes its youth and children Bible drillers. Shown are youth drillers Brooke Davis, Caroline Henson, Kevin Lee Henson, and Garrett Slay; and children's drillers Hope Gates, Payton Grogan, Patrick Slay, Emily Davis, Taylor Slay, Cade Daily, and Chase Daily.
2. **First Church, Columbus**, ordained Todd Core to the ministry in February. Shown are Jennifer Core, Core, and pastor Shawn Parker.
3. **Providence Church, Grenada**, recognized Winford Worsham for 45 years of service as deacon. He was presented a plaque by pastor Harvey Springer.
4. Mike and Sarah Prewitt were appointed as International Mission Board missionaries to Lisbon, Portugal at a service at Taylors First Church, Taylors, S.C., on Mar. 18. Sarah Prewitt is a native of Jackson.
5. **Cedar View Church, Olive Branch**, is hosting a community singing featuring the Geeslin Brothers, Apr. 18, 6 p.m.
6. **Crossgates Church, Brandon**, is hosting three Easter encounter services Apr. 12, at 8, 9:30, and 11 a.m.
7. **Mt. Olive and Hill View Churches, Carroll County**, will host a spring women's conference Apr. 18, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Dianne Fountain, speaker. Cost, \$15, which includes lunch. Call (662) 455-8989 or 453-6218 to register by Apr. 13.

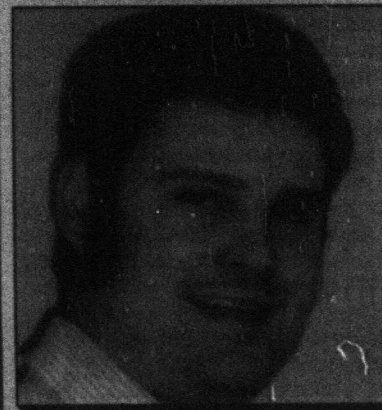
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COLLEGE NEWS

1. The Mississippi College table tennis team was one of 39 schools represented at the 2009 National Collegiate Table Tennis Association tournament Apr. 3 - 5.
2. Vietnam, a nine-foot bronze statue of an African-American soldier carrying his dead friend is one of 22 works by nationally renowned sculptor Charles Parks will be exhibited through April on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey University.
3. William Carey University will Celebrate the Arts April 15 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. with several lectures, a gallery talk and the dedication of the new Sarah Ellen Gillespie Museum of Art on the Hattiesburg campus. Dedication of the Sarah Ellen Gillespie Museum of Art (SEGMA) is at 2:30 p.m.
4. Boy with Hawk, a sculpture by nationally renowned artist Charles Cropper Parks is among 22 works on exhibit through April on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey University. The indoor exhibit located in the Smith Rouse Library and Tatum Court can be viewed Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. The exterior exhibit, located in front of Johnson Hall, can be viewed throughout the daylight hours.

STAFF CHANGES



1. Smith



5. The Ulmers



3. The Pursers

1. **Holcomb Church, Holcomb**, has called Josh Smith as youth minister. He is a student at Mid-America Seminary.
2. **Lake Como Church, Bay Springs**, has called Keith Ulmer as pastor. Shown are Ulmer, his wife Lori, and children Cassidy and Tyler.
3. **Valley Park Church, Issaquena**, has called Ronald Purser as pastor. Shown are the Pursers.
4. James "Jackie" Kay has accepted the pastorate of Central Park Church, Decatur, Ala. Kay pastored Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport, 1982 - 86.
5. **County Line Church, Crystal Springs**, has called Rodney Jones as pastor. He previously served Harmony Church as youth minister. He comes with his wife Robyn and daughters Tori and Savannah.



BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?

Luke 24:1-8, 36-40, 44-46

By Arthur Story

When you talk with any authentic follower of Christ you are talking with someone that truly believes in the fact that Jesus is alive; someone that celebrates the truth that Jesus is the living Lord and Savior. Believers may have differing views on a host of theological issues and the practical applications of living out one's faith, but they agree that Jesus has risen. An unbelieving world has trouble understanding our confidence in the truth of the resurrection. Some struggle because they don't believe Scripture is true, others struggle because of the world's inauthentic arguments opposing the resurrection, and still others struggle because too many believers cannot articulate why they believe in the resurrection.

This week's study of Luke 24 provides some overwhelming evidence to the truth of the res-

urrection.

The Empty Tomb (Luke 24:1-9)

The first evidence for the resurrection revealed in our text is the empty tomb. Critics are quick to attempt to dismiss the empty tomb as evidence for the resurrection by offering explanations that they believe discredit it. Here are some of their arguments:

The Wrong Tomb Theory - This is the argument that the women, and the disciple that went to check on their story, went to the wrong tomb. The problem here is that the Romans and Jewish leaders would have quickly corrected this error by pointing everyone to the right tomb.

The Stolen Body Theory - Here the argument is that the disciples came back and stole Jesus' body from the tomb. This is an incredible stretch. You have to work hard to



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believe that these fearful disciples that are dealing with their grief over Jesus' death would suddenly become courageous enough to come back and steal Jesus' body while Roman soldiers guarded the tomb.

The Moved Body Theory - The idea here is that Jesus' body was moved by the Jewish officials or Roman authorities. If this were the case, they would have presented the body and stopped the disciples' preaching on Jesus' resurrection.

The Swoon Theory - This is the argument that Jesus didn't die on the cross but rather passed out, then later awoke in the tomb, and then was wrongly believed by the disciples to have been resurrected. A couple of problems appear here. First, the Romans were exceptional executioners. They wouldn't have made this mistake. Secondly, a wounded Christ in need of significant medical assistance wouldn't be a compelling Risen Savior for His disciples.

Unfortunately for the skeptics, none of these arguments are convincing.

Jesus' Appearance (Luke 24:36-40)

When properly examined and understood, the empty tomb is a strong piece of evidence for the resurrection, but the empty tomb isn't all the evidence that is offered. The next evidence of the resurrection provided in our text is the appearance of Jesus to the disciples. Initially, Jesus appeared to two of His followers on the Emmaus road. Later, He appeared to a larger group in Jerusalem that consisted of the eleven disciples and some others.

While there are many recorded appearances of the resurrected Christ, the account of Jesus' appearance to His disciples in verses 36-40 is significant for two reasons. First, it proves that His appearance wasn't an illusion or hallucination. The fact that the disciples touched Him and the fact that He ate in their presence reveals that Jesus was physically alive. This wasn't the appearance of a ghost or vision. It was Jesus in the flesh. Secondly, this appearance also reveals that His resurrection wasn't a case of mistaken identity. The disciples rec-

ognized Him and were able to examine his hands and feet to see the scars of the crucifixion.

The combination of the empty tomb with the appearances of the risen Jesus (John 20:21, Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 23, Acts 1, and 1 Corinthians 15) is significant proof of the resurrection.

The Fulfillment of the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-47)

The final evidence for the resurrection comes from the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Here Jesus directed His disciples to the fact that the things written about Him in Scripture had come to fruition. Jesus then opened their minds to understand Scripture (verse 45). This undoubtedly gave them insight into texts like Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Psalm 16. Jesus concluded by clearly summarizing His fulfillment of Scripture (verses 46-47) and then charging them as His witnesses (verses 48-49).

The overwhelming evidence of the truth of the resurrection should lead every believer to celebrate Jesus, the living Savior and Lord. It should also lead us to be confident witnesses for Him.

Story is Minister of Education, First Church, Louisville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

The Lord is Alive

Matthew 28:1-17

By Beth S. Bowman

I lived in Ft. Lauderdale when Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida in 1992. By all predictions, the category four storm was going to hit our area hard. As with everyone in the neighborhood, I took the proper precautions to secure my belongings. Although the storm turned more southward in its last hours, our area did have damage. My detached garage was even more detached. Neighbors lost roofs, water poured into homes and precious belongings were gone. Our best preparations proved ineffective against the power of God. Today's lesson begins with the ineffective plans of the guards against the effective and dynamic power of God.

Guards vs. God (Matthew 27:62-28:5)
Looking at the five verses in Matthew 27:62-66 we read that

the chief priests and Pharisees thought they could guard against a disaster. They approached Pilate again. They remembered Jesus had said, "After three days I will rise again." They needed to guard against the disciples stealing the body to make this happen. They encouraged Pilate to have a stone rolled over the entrance and have guards stand watch. As you continue reading to 28:1-5, Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary" went back to the tomb. Suddenly they and the guards experienced a violent earthquake, saw an angel descend, and saw that an angel had rolled the stone from the entrance. The Bible tell us that the guards were so scared, they fainted!

Angels vs. Speechless, Scared Women (Matthew 28:5-7)
It is interesting to see that the first thing the angel told the



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women was not to be afraid. I am sure that feeling-seeing the stone rolled away, an angel sitting on the stone looking like lightening with some really white clothes on must have been scary for the two women. Note that for three verses, the women did not even speak. Can't you picture them wide-eyed, amazed, overwhelmed and...speechless?

God's messages for us should always prompt us to listen.

Fear vs. Joy (Matthew 28:8-10)

The women had both fear and joy at the scene at the tomb. They used both emotions to compel them to action. Then just as they were rushing to tell the disciples, they encounter the Risen Savior. What were Jesus' first words to them? "Good morning" (vs. HCSB). Can you imagine? Being greeted by the Savior God and realizing He arose. The promise of eternal life with God no longer a set of comforting words but a real event.

How did the women react? Fear again? No! I love what they did. They touched His feet as a sign of respect and worshipped. In the middle of witnessing God's power and plan, we need to stop and worship.

Truth vs. Hush Money (Matthew 28:11-15)

Here we are seeing the Chief Priests still trying to guard against disaster. This time they bribed the guards to tell everyone that the disciples stole the body of Jesus while they were asleep. Evidently, these guards did not have much pride. They did not mind anyone's thinking they were asleep on the job. Of course, they would rather tell a lie than the truth. Can you imagine that they would report, "This angel appeared, the stone was rolled away and it scared us so bad that we fainted like wimpy Jerusalem guards". (loose interpretation) Of course not! They were more than glad to secure their hush money and spread a lie.

Doubt vs. Belief (Matthew 28:16-17)

Matthew was probably sum-

marizing in these verses the teaching of Jesus since there are more accounts in the other Gospels of the interaction of Jesus with His disciples during this period. It is imperative to note in verse 17 that "some worshipped (when they saw Jesus) but some doubted." This is the dilemma we all must face. We must make a choice to believe or doubt. Although the scripture does not record individual reactions, each of the disciples had a time in which they were confronted with the ultimate question: Do I believe in the Risen Savior? Do I live my life for Him?

That is our question too. Many people outside the Christian faith agree with us as believers in Jesus that Jesus was an amazing person. Many believe that His life was different, compelling, and life changing. But far from being just a person worthy of our trust, devotion and worship. He is the Risen Savior of the world. This I believe!

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon,

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Branch Church, Morton



3. First Church, Plantersville



4. Robertson licensing



5. Gregory ordination



1. Leaf River Church, Pineville, is hosting an Easter egg hunt Apr. 11, 3 p.m., followed by a church-wide fellowship at 5 p.m.; Easter cantata Apr. 12, 7 a.m., with breakfast.

2. Branch Church, Morton, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2009, with an old-fashioned day May 2, 1-4 p.m. Shown are children singing Happy Birthday to the church with the church's birthday cake on Jan. 4.

3. First Church, Plantersville, held its 3rd annual Free Day, during which community residents were able to shop for free items donated by church members, including clothing, household items, furniture, etc. Residents were registered and presented the gospel. This year 187 people were registered. Shown are church members who assisted in this ministry.

4. First Church, Ocean Springs, licensed Scott Robertson to the ministry Mar. 8. Shown are Mike Barnett, Christina Stubbs, Robertson, and Terry Upchurch.

5. Larry Gregory was ordained as a deacon at Harmony Church, Louisville, Mar. 15. Shown are Jerry Lundy, Gregory, and Glenda Gregory.

6. East Columbia Church, Columbia, held a baby dedication service Feb. 1. Participants were Neal and Amy Herrin and Lauren, Jeremy Allen and Kayleigh, and Scott and Amy Breland and Taylor. Philip Duncan, pastor.

7. New Hope Church, Amory, honored Clovis "Punk" Ford for 56 years of service as a deacon Nov. 23, 2008. He was honored with a meal, singing, special gifts and an appreciation plaque. Shown are Mable Ford, Ford, and pastor Tim McMillen.

8. Pike County Association sponsored a RA racer race-off. Shown are the participants.

9. Eastside Church, Magee, recently ordained Scott Wallace as deacon. Shown are pastor John Paul Adcock and Wallace.



6. East Columbia Church, Columbia



7. Ford recognition



8. RA racers



9. Wallace ordination